

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for controlling conference room devices connected to
2 a first computer, the method comprising:
3 receiving status information from the conference room devices
4 connected to the first computer;
5 displaying a device menu of available devices for a particular
6 conference room;
7 displaying a control menu to control at least one of the available
8 devices; and
9 transmitting commands to a selected one of the available devices to
10 control the selected device in response to user input.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the devices include at least one of
2 an ambient lighting control, ambient temperature control, a speaker phone, audio
3 equipment, video equipment, window coverings, and a physical access control.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the device menu and the control
2 menu are displayed simultaneously.

1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the device menu and the control
2 menu are displayed on a common screen.

1 5. The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying a type menu
2 for selection of a type of conference.

1 6. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of displaying a device
2 menu comprises displaying a device menu of available devices corresponding to the
3 type of conference selected.

1 7. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of displaying a type menu
2 comprises displaying buttons corresponding to at least a local meeting, an audio
3 conference, and a video conference.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the displaying steps comprise
2 sending formatted menus to a second computer via a computer network wherein the
3 second computer is remotely located from the first computer to allow a remote user
4 to control the conference room devices.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the displaying steps comprise
2 sending web browser compatible menus to a second computer accessible via the
3 internet.

1 10. The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying status
2 information for at least one of the conference room devices connected to the first
3 computer.

1 11. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 automatically determining whether a compatible device has been added
3 to or removed from the conference computer; and
4 automatically updating a status of the compatible device on at least
5 one of the menus.

1 12. The method of claim 1 further comprising automatically sending
2 a message to technical support in response to a corresponding device status.

1 13. The method of claim 12 wherein the step of sending comprises
2 sending an email message.

1 14. The method of claim 12 wherein the step of sending comprises
2 transmitting a numeric or alphanumeric message to a wireless device indicating a
3 need for technical support.

1 15. The method of claim 1 further comprising sending a video image
2 of the conference room to technical support personnel.

1 16. The method of claim 15 further comprising sending a
2 videoconferencing output to technical support personnel in addition to the video
3 image of the conference room to aid in troubleshooting any problems with the
4 conference room devices.

1 17. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of displaying a control
2 menu comprises displaying a plurality of buttons including at least buttons
3 corresponding to play, pause, stop, forward, and reverse.

1 18. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of displaying a control
2 menu comprises displaying a plurality of buttons including at least buttons
3 corresponding to pan, tilt, and zoom.

1 19. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting comprises
2 wirelessly transmitting commands from the first computer to the conference room
3 devices.

1 20. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting comprises
2 transmitting commands from the first computer to the conference room devices using
3 a two-way protocol.

1 21. The method of claim 20 wherein the two-way protocol comprises
2 at least one of RS-232 and telnet.

1 22. The method of claim 1 wherein the steps of displaying comprise
2 displaying menus for selection by a user via pointing or touching.

1 23. The method of claim 1 further comprising transmitting a video
2 image of the conference room.

1 24. The method of claim 1 further comprising selectively transmitting
2 a video image of the conference room to a remotely located technician to facilitate
3 troubleshooting of at least one conference room device.

1 25. The method of claim 24 further comprising transmitting a
2 videoconferencing feed to a remotely located technician via the first computer to
3 facilitate troubleshooting of at least one conference room device.

1 26. The method of claim 1 further comprising remotely accessing a
2 video image of the conference room via the first computer to facilitate remote
3 troubleshooting of at least one conference room device.

1 27. The method of claim 26 further comprising remotely accessing
2 a videoconferencing feed to facilitate remote troubleshooting.

1 28. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 locally previewing output from a selected one of the devices; and
3 sending the output to a remote location in response to a send
4 command.

1 29. The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying a summary
2 screen having status information for all conference room devices associated with a
3 selected conference room.

1 30. A computer readable storage medium having stored data
2 representing instructions executable by a computer to control conference room
3 devices, the computer readable storage medium comprising:
4 instructions for receiving status information from the devices;
5 instructions for displaying a device menu of available devices for a
6 particular conference room;
7 instructions for displaying a control menu to control at least one of the
8 available devices; and
9 instructions for transmitting commands to a selected one of the
10 available devices to control the device in response to user input.

1 31. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 wherein the
2 devices include at least one lighting, temperature, window coverings, audio
 equipment, video equipment, and a physical access control device.

1 32. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 wherein the
2 instructions for displaying comprise instructions for sending formatted menus to a
3 second computer via a computer network wherein the second computer is remotely
4 located from the first computer to allow a remote user to control the conference
5 room devices.

1 33. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 wherein the
2 instructions for displaying comprise instructions for sending web browser compatible
3 menus to a second computer accessible via the internet.

1 34. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 further
2 comprising:
3 instructions for automatically determining whether a compatible
4 device has been connected or disconnected such that the compatible device is
5 available or unavailable, respectively; and
6 instructions for automatically updating a status of the compatible
7 device on at least one of the menus based on the device being connected to or
8 disconnected from the computer.

1 35. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 further
2 comprising instructions for automatically sending a message to technical support in
3 response to a corresponding device status.

1 36. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 wherein the
2 instructions for displaying a control menu comprise instructions for displaying a
3 plurality of buttons including at least buttons corresponding to pan, tilt, and zoom.

1 37. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 wherein the
2 instructions for transmitting comprise instructions for wirelessly transmitting
3 commands to the conference room devices.

1 38. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 wherein the
2 instructions for transmitting comprise instructions for transmitting commands to the
conference room devices using a two-way protocol.

1 39. The computer readable storage medium of claim 38 wherein the
2 two-way protocol comprises at least one of RS-232 and telnet.

1 40. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 wherein the
2 instructions for displaying comprise instructions for displaying menus via a touch
3 panel directly connected to the computer.

1 41. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 further
2 comprising instructions for transmitting a video image of the conference room to a
3 remote location.

1 42. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 further
2 comprising instructions for displaying a type menu for selection of a type of
3 conference.

1 43. The computer readable storage medium of claim 42 wherein the
2 instructions for displaying a device menu display a device menu of available devices
3 corresponding to a selected type of conference.

1 44. The computer readable storage medium of claim 42 wherein the
2 instructions for displaying a type menu comprise instructions for displaying buttons
3 corresponding to at least a local meeting, an audio conference, and a video
4 conference.

1 45. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 further
2 comprising:
3 instructions for locally previewing output from a selected one of the
4 devices; and
5 instructions for sending the output from the selected one of the devices
6 to a remote location in response to a send command.

1 46. The computer readable storage medium of claim 30 further
2 comprising instructions for displaying a summary screen having status information
3 for all conference room devices associated with a particular conference room.

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47. A system for controlling conference room devices, the system comprising:

a computer connected to a computer network accessible by at least one remotely located computer;

a device connected to the computer for displaying menus and receiving input from users in the conference room;

a camera directly connected to the computer, the camera receiving commands from the computer including at least zoom, tilt, and pan commands, and sending status information to the computer including at least on and off;

a telephone in communication with the computer for dialing telephone numbers and providing audio communication between the conference room and a remote location;

wherein the computer generates commands to display menus and receive commands via the touch panel including a device menu showing available devices and corresponding control menus.

48. A system for remotely accessing conference room devices, the system comprising:

a computer having a first interface for connecting the conference room devices and a second interface for remotely accessing the computer, wherein the computer transmits information via the second interface indicative of available conference room devices connected to the first interface for a selected conference room.

49. The system of claim 48 wherein the computer receives status information from at least one conference room device via the first interface and transmits status information for the at least one conference room device via the second interface.

50. The system of claim 48 wherein the computer transmits commands via the first interface to control at least one conference room device.

1 51. The system of claim 48 wherein the computer receives a
2 command from a second computer via the second interface and transmits a
3 corresponding command via the first interface to control at least one conference
4 room device.

1 52. The system of claim 48 wherein the conference room devices
2 include a videoconferencing camera, a videoconferencing monitor, and a conference
3 room camera connected to the computer via the first interface, wherein the computer
4 selectively transmits images from the conference room camera, which is remotely
5 controllable via the second interface, to facilitate remote troubleshooting of the
6 videoconferencing camera and/or monitor by a technician.

1 53. The system of claim 52 wherein the computer selectively
2 transmits images from the videoconferencing camera via the second interface to a
3 remotely located technician to facilitate troubleshooting of the videoconferencing
4 camera and/or monitor.

1 54. A method for controlling conference room devices associated
2 with a conference room, the conference room devices connected to a first computer,
3 the method comprising:

4 receiving a scheduling request for the conference room including a
5 date and time; and

6 automatically generating a request to control at least one of the
7 conference room devices via the first computer based on the scheduled date and time.

1 55. The method of claim 54 wherein the conference room devices
2 include a physical access control device and wherein the step of automatically
3 generating a request comprises automatically generating a request to control the
4 physical access control device to allow access to the conference room based on the
5 scheduled date and time.

1 56. The method of claim 54 wherein the scheduling request includes
2 a request for use of video and/or audio conferencing devices, the method further
3 comprising:

4 automatically requesting connections from a bridge provider based on
5 the date and time.

1 57. The method of claim 54 wherein the scheduling request identifies
2 at least one conference room device, the method further comprising:

3 . automatically determining status of the at least one conference room
4 device; and

5 automatically contacting technical support if the status of the at least
6 one conference room device indicates a problem.